



# Hardwood Manufacturers Association

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## Reminders for keeping cool in summer extremes

Heat is the number one weather-related killer in the United States, on average claiming more lives each year than tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, and lightning combined. And North American summers are hot, especially East of the Rockies where high temperatures coupled with high humidity pose a potentially deadly situation.

In response, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, OSHA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are broadcasting the following warnings, tips, guidelines regarding staying well in hot weather.

When the body gets too hot, it normally cools itself by sweating. But when the humidity is high, sweat does not evaporate as quickly, limiting the body's natural cooling-off mechanism. Factor in age, obesity, dehydration, sunburn, medication and alcohol use, and it's the perfect storm for heat exposure.

Those most at risk are infants and young children, Seniors aged 65 or older, the mentally ill and those with chronic diseases, especially heart disease or high blood pressure.

### **If you must be outdoors, here's how to cope.**

- Limit outdoor activity to morning and evening hours.
- Minimize exercise and be sure to drink two to four glasses of cool, nonalcoholic fluids each hour.
- Protective clothing should include sunglasses, a wide-brimmed hat and sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher.
- Rest often in shaded areas.

Best case scenario is that summertime activity be balanced with common sense and "measures that aid the body's cooling mechanisms" like these **prevention tips**:

- Stay indoors, preferably in an air-conditioned place. Home not air-conditioned? Spending time at the library, mall or heat-relief shelters, for even a few hours, can help keep body temperature down.
- With no AC at home, electric fans can help. But taking a cool shower or bath is the ticket for a bit of cooling comfort.
- Wear as little clothing as possible and choose light-colored, light-weight, loose-fitting clothing.
- Drink more fluids, no matter what your activity level. Avoid alcoholic and high sugar drinks which cause loss of body fluid. And avoid very cold drinks. They can cause stomach cramps.
- Eat light. Hot foods and heavy meals add heat to the body.
- Never leave infants, children or pets in a parked car. Visit at risk adults twice daily to monitor for heat-related stress.

Remember, the best defense is prevention. And exercising common sense is the first step to an enjoyable summer, no matter what the temperature.